

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Delete the heading CLAIMS and substitute therefore the phrase **What is Claimed is:**  
before claim 1.

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the  
application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) A process for the manufacture of a protecting and immobilising element ~~of the mattress-like type~~ having a mattress shape, comprising the stages of providing containing means (2, 20); providing a layer of flexible material (3, 21) and arranging it inside the containing means (2, 20), with the peripheral edges (4, 22) of the flexible layer (3, 21) protruding from the containing means (2, 20) ; arranging anchoring means (5) and a first netting structure (6, 23) inside the containing means (2, 20) , the netting structure (6, 23) being in direct contact with the flexible layer (3, 21) and the anchoring means (5) passing through the netting structure at predetermined positions (12, 25) ; filling the containing means (2, 20) with a filling material (7) comprising solid and/or fluid elements; superposing a second netting structure (8) on the filling material (7) , and superposing, at least partially, the peripheral edges (4, 22) of the flexible layer (3, 21) in such a manner as to produce a closed cover from which the ends (11, 27) of the anchoring means (5) protrude.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterised in that it comprises the following stages:

a) providing a mould (2);

- b) providing a layer of flexible material (3);
- c) arranging the flexible layer (3) inside the mould (2), the peripheral edges (4) of the flexible layer (3) protruding from the mould (2);
- d) arranging anchoring means (5) at predetermined positions (12) on the surface of the flexible layer (3);
- e) arranging, inside the mould (2) and in direct contact with the flexible layer (3), a first netting structure (6), the anchoring means (5) passing through the netting structure (6);
- f) filling the mould (2) with a filling material (7) comprising solid and/or fluid elements, the upper ends of the anchoring means (5) emerging from the layer of filling material (7) ;
- g) superposing a second netting structure (8) on the filling material (7), the upper ends of the anchoring means (5) passing through the second netting structure (8); and
- h) closing the peripheral edges (4) of the flexible layer (3) in such a manner as to produce a closed cover from which the upper ends of the anchoring means (5) emerge.

A process according to claim 2, characterised in that the anchoring means (5) comprise at least one plate (9) secured to at least one cylindrical element (10) extending perpendicularly relative to the surface of the plate (9), the cylindrical element (10) comprising fastening means (11, 14, 17).

3. (Original) A process according to claim 3, characterised in that, during stage d), the plate (9) is arranged in direct contact with the surface of the flexible layer (3).

A process according to claim 4, characterised in that, during stage e), the plate (9) is disposed between the surface of the flexible layer (3) and the netting structure (6) .

4. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterised in that it comprises the following stages:

- a) providing a mould (20);
- b) providing a layer of flexible material (21);
- c) arranging the flexible layer (21) inside the mould (20), the peripheral edges (22) of the flexible layer (21) protruding from the mould (20);
- d) arranging, inside the mould (20) and in direct contact with the flexible layer (21), a first netting structure (23), the peripheral edges (24) of the netting structure (23) protruding from the mould (20);
- e) arranging anchoring means (5) at predetermined positions (25) on the upper surface of the netting structure (23), the anchoring means (5) passing through the first netting structure (23);
- f) filling the mould (20) with a filling material (7) comprising solid and/or fluid elements;
- g) superposing, at least partially, the peripheral edges (24) of the netting structure (23) on the filling material (7), and superposing a second netting structure (8) on the filling material (7) and on the peripheral edges (24) ; and
- h) superposing, at least partially, the peripheral edges (22) of the flexible layer (21) in such a manner as to produce a closed cover from which the ends (27) of the anchoring means (5) protrude.

A process according to claim 6, characterised in that, between stage e) and stage h), it comprises the following stages:

f) superposing, at least partially, the peripheral edges (24) of the netting structure (23) on the base of the netting structure (23);

g) filling the mould (20) with a filling material (7) comprising solid and/or fluid elements, and superposing on the filling material (7) a second netting structure (8).

5. (Original) A protecting and immobilising element of the mattresslike type, produced by means of a process according to any one of the preceding claims, comprising:

- a layer of flexible covering material (3);
- a netting structure (6) covered with the flexible layer (3);
- anchoring means (5) contained inside the netting structure; and
- a filling material (7), comprising solid and/or fluid elements, which is contained inside the covered netting structure (6);

characterised in that the flexible covering layer (3) and the netting structure (6) are in direct contact with one another, with the ends of the anchoring means (5) disposed between them.

A protecting element according to claim 8, characterised in that the anchoring means (5) comprise an omegashaped bent bar (19), the upper end (31) of the bar (19) being accommodated

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inside a portion of a hollow cylindrical element (15).

6-13 (Withdrawn)